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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 08/19/08

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ARTICLES:

(1) Okinawa alone sees sharp increase in number of visits by U.S. nuclear-powered submarines; Record already broken; Levels remain same as last year at other ports; Increase may indicate intensified activities

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)  
August 18, 2008

White Beach in Okinawa Prefecture, Sasebo base in Nagasaki, and Yokosuka base in Kanagawa are often visited by the U.S. Navy's

nuclear-powered submarines. It has become clear through surveys by those local governments that visits to the naval base in Okinawa alone have markedly increased. U.S. nuclear-powered submarines have made a record 27 visits to White Beach in Uruma City this year. Meanwhile, 11 nuclear-powered vessels, including nine nuclear-powered submarines, have visited Sasebo, and five nuclear-powered subs made port calls at Yokosuka -- about the same levels as last year.

This can be taken as indicating that the U.S. Navy has intensified its activities in waters near Okinawa against the backdrop of the Chinese Navy's advancement. Masato Shiozaki, a member of Rimpeace, a civic group monitoring U.S. military activities, including nuclear-powered submarines at Sasebo, noted: "With the renovation of White Beach's berth, (Okinawa's role) seems to have been shifted from a venue providing short-term support to a place extending long-term support."

Shiozaki added: "(Dredging) work is underway at Yokosuka in preparation for the arrival of the USS George Washington, a U.S. Seventh Fleet aircraft carrier. Crews of several U.S. nuclear-powered submarines have had occasions to visit other ports in Japan, including Okinawa." He thus indicated that the dredging work at Yokosuka has had an impact on port calls in Okinawa.

The USS La Jolla entered Sasebo port on Aug. 4 for the first time, following the revelation of an accident in which another U.S. nuclear submarine leaked cooling water containing radiation. On Aug. 15, the La Jolla reentered Sasebo port, marking the ninth visit to the port by U.S. nuclear-powered submarines this year. Last year,

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the naval base was visited by a total of 12 nuclear-powered vessels, including an aircraft carrier.

The Yokosuka base, where the dredging work is underway, has been visited by a total of five nuclear-powered submarines, the same as the number recorded in early August last year. A Yokosuka military base affairs division source said: "Overall, there has been no change in Yokosuka. There were five port calls as of July 31, 2007. At this pace, it would result in the same trend as last year."

Last year, White Beach confirmed a record 24 visits, breaking the 20 line for the first time. The record was already broken in July this year.

(2) Okinawa prefectural government announces radioactivity readout "same as normal level" after conducting third-day radiological investigation near USS Columbus

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 7) (Full)  
August 16, 2008

Regarding the results of a third-day radiological investigation near the USS Columbus, a 6,082-ton Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered submarine of the U.S. Navy, now berthed at White Beach in Heshikiya, Katsuren, Uruma City, the Okinawa prefectural government military base affairs department announced yesterday that its radioactivity readout was the "same as the normal level." The time and date of its departure remain unknown.

(3) DPJ policy (Part 3): Political initiative a thorny path

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
August 15, 2008

"Political initiative" is one of the keywords that have been discussed in the world of politics over the past decade or so for political reform. It connotes that politicians break away from the bureaucracy's control and display leadership.

What has been done under the so-called political initiative includes restructuring government ministries and agencies, beefing up the functions of the prime minister's office, and establishing senior vice ministerial posts. Apart from whether the political initiative has led to remarkable achievements, politicians have explored

various ways for political reform.

Prime Minister Fukuda recently shuffled his cabinet--apparently in an attempt to strengthen the political initiative. Fukuda appointed a former cabinet minister to the post of senior vice minister for the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), which has been rocked over the pension fiasco. Why?

Each of the government's ministries and agencies is headed by a cabinet minister. Furthermore, in the case of the MHLW, there are two senior vice ministers and two parliamentary secretaries as political appointees. They are all politicians and team up with the minister to take the political initiative.

However, one politician, who has now left that MHLW political team with Fukuda's shuffle of his cabinet, recalls: "The administrative vice minister, who tops all bureaucrats, never came to my room. I just received reports in the name of 'lecture' from the directors

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general of bureaus, so I couldn't take part in policy planning or decision making. I asked Minister Masuzoe to meet. But I never had even a chance to dine with him. My job was only to attend ceremonies in his stead."

Government posts for political appointees are something ornamental with no real powers to control bureaucrats, a far cry from the political initiative... This system has been introduced under the initiative of Ichiro Ozawa, president of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto). In 1998, Ozawa, who was president of the Liberal Party (Jiyuto), held talks with his counterpart from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to iron out policy differences between the two parties for coalition government. Ozawa pushed the LDP to abolish the government's parliamentary delegate system, under which government bureaucrats used to reply to Diet interpellations. Instead, Ozawa advocated senior vice ministerial posts. In 1999, his advocacy came true. Ozawa, confident of the political initiative, was sure that it would bring a big change.

On July 13, Ozawa addressed a political seminar. In his speech there, Ozawa was eloquent about his political concept he would shape after the DPJ takes the reins of government. While insisting on the political initiative, Ozawa sighed over the current status of senior vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries. He went on: "This system is now in place, and there are more posts. Politicians are happy. But bureaucrats are sneering at them. When we come into office, we will fix this system in a thoroughgoing way."

Lawmakers in the ruling parties enter the cabinet as senior vice ministers. Among politicians familiar with policies, lawmakers belonging to the ruling parties are prone to speak for bureaucrats as zoku giin--or lobbyist politicians acting in the interests of certain government ministries and industries. Meanwhile, senior vice ministers are expected to master bureaucrats within the government.

Junichiro Koizumi is said to have pushed for the political initiative. In 2002, when Koizumi was prime minister, he thought to halt the bureaucracy's traditional practice of planning and implementing policies with the LDP's zoku giin legislators standing behind. Then, Koizumi told the LDP's leadership to discuss his idea of doing away with the LDP's prior examination of government-planned policies. The government customarily had to ask the ruling party for its approval of legislative measures before adopting them in a cabinet meeting. Koizumi thought that this had strengthened ties between the government's bureaucracy and the LDP's zoku giin politicians. However, his advocacy faced negative reactions from within the LDP and faded away.

The question is how Ozawa will have the system of senior vice ministers function effectively. In his seminar speech, Ozawa cited Britain's parliamentary politics." At the time of Prime Minister Blair," Ozawa said, "200 politicians filled government posts." With this, Ozawa depicted his image of government.

According to the DPJ's concept of government, the ruling party's

executives, including its secretary general and its policy board chairman, are to serve concurrently as cabinet ministers. The ruling party and the cabinet become one, so there is no need for government-planned policies to go through the ruling party's prior examination. Shortly after the DPJ takes office, the prime minister and all cabinet ministers and the political teams of senior vice

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ministers at government ministries and agencies meet for training.

The DPJ will require senior government bureaucrats-or more precisely the administrative vice minister of each ministry and the directors general of each ministry's bureaus-to cooperate on its manifesto. The government currently has a total of 48 posts for senior vice ministers and parliamentary secretaries as political appointees. The DPJ plans to double this lineup so its politicians can supervise and oversee each bureau of all government ministries and agencies...

This is the last of a three-part series.

(4) Interview with Defense Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi --  
Reinvestigation into Japanese abductees must be confirmed as necessary

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
August 16, 2008

Japan and North Korea have agreed at the latest working-level talks in China's Shenyang that Pyongyang would reinvestigate the Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea. The Yomiuri Shimbun interviewed Defense Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi to find out his views on, among other matters, North Korean issues and the question of the continuation of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean.

-- What is your assessment of the Japan-DPRK working-level talks?

"The two countries have come to terms on specifically how to reinvestigate the matter, so they deserve a positive assessment of some sort. An accord was reached for North Korea to report progress to Japan whenever necessary and for Japan to confirm progress. But the talks stopped short of agreeing on concrete steps (for Japan) to confirm progress at various stages. The question is how to confirm the progress."

-- How should the abduction issue be settled?

"Simply put, diplomatic ties must be normalized early by resolving the abduction, nuclear and missile issues and by settling the unfortunate past in accordance with the Japan-Pyongyang Declaration."

-- What is your view of the U.S. government's response regarding its decision to delist North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism?

"The process concerns only the U.S. government. Basically, the question is what decision the other side makes. Nevertheless, we are in accord on the importance of agreeing on how (the North Korean nuclear declaration) should be verified specifically and on beginning the verification process based on that."

-- What is your perception of the nuclear and missile threats from North Korea?

"North Korea has a population of 23 million; including 1.1 million in the military. Putting high priority on military might, the country is posing a threat. As seen from its nuclear test, that country is an unstable factor in the region."

-- Are you planning to submit to the next extraordinary Diet session

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a bill amending the new Antiterrorism Special Measures Law for the continuation of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling

operation in the Indian Ocean?

"The government has yet to determine its policy. There is a consensus on the need of the war on terror. We, too, must convey its significance to the world and explain it. Japan is conducting its refueling operation against the backdrop of a variety of arguments. It is necessary to explain their gravity and then to discuss what conclusion we should aim at."

-- What is your view of the report by the Council on Reform of the Defense Ministry and how should it be proceeded?

"We will steadily implement what is in the council report one by one. We must create a cycle of restored public trust and increased SDF morale. I will craft implementation plans and include what is necessary in the budgetary request for fiscal 2009 by basically following my predecessor, Mr. Ishiba's policy course."

(5) Editorial: Aug. 15 -- We should reaffirm Japan-U.S. relations

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
August 15, 2008

Today marks the 63rd anniversary of the end of World War II. Like that day 63 years ago, amid the chirring of cicadas in chorus, the nation prays for the repose of the souls of the war dead.

Meanwhile many Japanese people are now interested in the Beijing Olympic Games. People are paying attention not only to the performances of Japanese athletes but also to the way China is taking advantage of the Olympics to show off its national strength.

The opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics was attended by leaders from more than 80 countries, including Japan, the United States, and Russia, the largest number of participants in the history of the Olympic Games. French President Nicolas Sarkozy attended the opening ceremony although he had announced his absence.

Olympics for China to display its strength

The largest number of world leaders attended the ceremony. This is also a result of China's diplomatic efforts. It may safely be said that this indicates that the world cannot ignore for better or worse China to become a superpower with its economic development and military buildup.

China's economic growth, which makes us think of the revival of an "empire," has become an element to fundamentally rock Japan's national strategy that has maintained its security and prosperity, centering on its alliance with the United States based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Therefore, we can say that it is significant for Japan to mark the anniversary of the end of the war during the Beijing Olympics from the viewpoint of considering Japan's postwar period and future.

The U.S. Bush administration has put off delisting North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism although it planned to do so on Aug. 11 in return for the DPRK's declaration of its nuclear programs. However, the postponement is just a temporary ease of mind for Japan, which has regarded the inclusion of North Korea in a U.S.

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list of state sponsors of terrorism as a diplomatic card to resolve North Korea's abductions of Japanese nationals.

It seems unavoidable that U.S. public opinion will lean to China. This is because we deem it difficult to stop the United States from giving priority to such multilateral negotiations as the six-party talks rather than to the Japan-U.S. alliance under the East Asian security framework. It is not only the United States that makes light of the Japan-U.S. alliance and nullify it.

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean to back up U.S.-led antiterror operations was suspended for about three months this year. This is attributable to the delayed enactment of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law,

resulting from the Diet's current divided situation where the opposition camp dominates its upper chamber while the ruling coalition holds a majority of the seats in its lower chamber.

In addition to the opposition bloc, the New Komeito, the junior coalition partner of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), is also opposed to extending the law. So, it is now extremely difficult to continue the MSDF's refueling mission. As it stands, the United States might well think Japan will only ask for help and will never come to help.

#### Learn from the annulment of Anglo-Japanese Alliance

Some Japanese lawmakers, including Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa, have called for placing importance on multinational talks rather than the Japan-U.S. alliance. Ozawa has advocated U.N.-centered diplomacy. It goes without saying that such a situation is similar to the time when the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was abrogated.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, concluded in 1902, contributed to Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War and ensured Japan's stable status in the international community. However, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was abrogated since the Four-Power Treaty by Japan, the United States, Britain and France was signed at the Washington Naval Conference in 1921.

The Four-Power Treaty was intended for the United States and China to drive a wedge into the Japan-Britain relations. Another reason was that there was a mood in Japan exploring multilateral cooperation rather than cooperation with Britain.

Although the Four-Power Treaty advocated international cooperation in the Pacific region, it did not ensure Japan's security at all, unlike the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Japan, which lost the only alliance, was increasingly isolated in the international community, and it had to head down the path of destruction in World War II.

If Japan chose a multilateral framework with China, which has different values, and South Korea, which has strengthened a hostile stance toward it, it would have to walk the path of isolation.

It is also important for Japan to strengthen its "independence," preparing for "the United States' change of mind."

However, what Japan should do before that is to make sure its bond with the United States by showing Washington its effort for continuing its refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. Tokyo must

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prevent China and North Korea from rocking the Japan-U.S. relations.

Japan must depict a blueprint so as not to lead the country in the wrong direction. That means to comfort the spirits of 3 million people who died in the war.

SCHIEFFER